

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 L-03 /018 W
-----042208Z 054528 /73

R 041301Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4450
USIA WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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VIENNA FOR RPO

E O 11652: NA
TAGS: OGEN
SUBJ: US FILM RETROSPECTIVE

REF: STATE 071323

1. PAO CALLED ON DR. MERKEL, MFA CULTURAL CHIEF, TO CONVEY
SUBSTANCE OF REFTEL AND EXPLORE OPTIONS PERTAINING TO US
FILM RETROSPECTIVE IN WAKE OF GDR DECISION PRESENT GRIFFITH
FESTIVAL APRIL 12-MAY 6. IN ADDITION MAIN POINTS, MERKEL
WAS TOLD THAT EMBASSY DOES NOT FIND SUCH UNILATERAL MOVES
CONDUCTIVE TO BETTERMEN RELATIONS, THAT AT THIS EARLY STAGE
IN BILATERAL CULTURAL AFFAIRS, EMBASSY WOULD LIKE MAKE CLEAR
THAT CONTINUING CONSULTATION RATHER THAN FAITS ACCOMPLI
REPRESENT NORMAL COURSE OF CONDUCT, AND THAT WHILE IT TRUE
THAT DIFFICULTY OF ACQUISITION GERMAN-VERSION AMERICAN
FILMS DELAYED SUBMISSION FILM LIST, MINISTRY OF CULTURE,
ON OTHER HAND, HAD NEVER DELIVERED ITS LIST, NOR NAILED
DOWN THE THREATRE AND OTHER NECESSARY DETAILS, DESPITE
REPEATED EMBASSY EFFORTS ASCERTAIN STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS.

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2. MERKEL RESPONDED AT FIRST WITH EXPRESSION OF REGRET
THAT EMBASSY HAD INDEED BEEN PRESENTED WITH FINAL
DECISION WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION, SAID HE HAD NOT
BEEN AWARE THAT EVERY PHASE HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED
WITH EMBASSY, AND AGREED THAT IN FUTURE CONTINUING
COMMUNICATION WOULD BE PROCEDURE FOLLOWED. HE THEN

POINTED OUT THAT, WHILE PLEASED THAT EMBASSY WOULD SUPPORT GRIFFITH FESTIVAL EVEN IF IT DID NOT REPRESENT SCOPE OF INTENDED RETROSPECTIVE, THE CONCEPT FOR SUCH A PROGRAM WAS INITIALLY PUT FORTH BY EMBASSY AT MUCH EARLIER DATE, AND THAT A GRIFFITH RETROSPECTIVE HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITH MOMA AT TIME OF GDR RETROSPECTIVE 1975 AND LATER WITH EMBASSY, AS ONE OF SEVERAL POSSIBLE RECIPROCAL UNDERTAKINGS.

3. AS FOR REQUEST THAT ABORTED MODERN FILM RETROSPECTIVE BE PUT ON LATE MAY OR EARLY JUNE, MERKEL SAID TWO AMERICAN FILM WEEKS IN ONE YEAR STRUCK HIM AS "TOO MUCH WEIGHT ON ONE ASPECT OF AMERICAN CULTURE," AND PRESSED FOR ACCEPTANCE IN 1978. AT SAME TIME, HE SAID, HE WANTED EMBASSY TO KNOW THAT GDR WAS ALWAYS PREPARED ACCEPT NEWER AMERICAN FILMS FOR WHICH HE PREDICTED GREAT INTEREST AND AUDIENCES.

4. MERKEL WAS THEN TOLD THAT EMBASSY INTENDED SOON PRESENT AMERICAN POST-WAR FILMS ONCE A MONTH IN EMBASSY AUDITORIUM AND HOPED THAT GDR CITIZENS WOULD HAVE ACCESS. MERKEL SAID HE WAS CERTAIN EMBASSY KNEW, ESPECIALLY AFTER GRUNERT-CHARGE DISCUSSION, THAT ALL INVITATIONS HAD TO BE CHANNELED THROUGH MFA PROTOCOL, AND WHEN PAO COMMENTED THAT SUCH CONTROLS WERE REGRETTABLE, MERKEL GAVE THE ILLUMINATING REPLY THAT CONTROL WAS NOT THE POINT BUT RATHER THE GUARANTEE TO THE EMBASSY THAT ALL INVITATIONS WOULD BE DELIVERED, AND THAT IT WAS NOT THE MFA'S FUNCTION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO PLACE OBSTACLES IN THE EMBASSY'S PATH. HE QUICKLY ADDED THAT HE HOPED HE WOULD RECEIVE FREQUENT INVITATIONS BECAUSE OF HIS ADMIRATION FOR AMERICAN FILMS. NOTE-TAKER FRAU TEUTSCHBEIN LOOKED UP QUICKLY AND ECHOED HIS REQUEST.

5. CONCLUDING, PAO SAID WHILE GRIFFITH FESTIVAL WAS SPRUNG ON EMBASSY WITHOUT NOTICE, IT MIGHT NOT BE TOO LATE TO HAVE US CONSULTANT, SUCH AS JOHN KUIPER FROM LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, FOR SEMINAR AND MEETINGS WITH GDR FILM PERSONALITIES. KUIPER'S NAME WAS NOTED DOWN AS MERKEL IMMEDIATELY AGREED AND ASKED IF THE EMBASSY PLANNED ANY FORMAL RECOGNITION OF THE GRIFFITH FESTIVAL, AND WAS TOLD THAT THE TIME WAS TOO SHORT, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF MFA PROTOCOL REQUIREMENTS, TO PLAN ANYTHING, EVEN AN APPROPRIATE EXHIBIT.

6. COMMENT: MERKEL WAS FLUSTERED BY THE OPENING PRESENTATION BUT IT PUT THE EMBASSY ON RECORD REGARDING

THE EXPECTED MODALITIES OF CULTURAL RELATIONS AND
MAY PRECLUDE A REPETITION AS CULTURAL AFFAIRS PROGRESS.
WHILE THE ISSUE OF TIMING FOR THE MODERN FILM WEEK
IS NOT YET BURIED, MFA RESISTANCE MAKES IT APPEAR
UNLIKELY THAT AGREEMENT WILL BE GIVEN TO A LATER DATE
THIS YEAR. THE EMBASSY PLANS A TOTALLY PASSIVE ROLE
IN THE GRIFFITH FESTIVAL, AND EVEN THROUGH DR. KUIPER'S
POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION WAS RAISED, IT WAS DONE MORE
TO TEST THE WATERS THAN TO TAKE A PLUNGE. THE EMBASSY
BELIEVES THAT THE GRIFFITH PROGRAM SHOULD BE VIEWED AS
A PURELY GDR INITIATIVE AND KEPT SEPARATE FROM ANY
US INVOLVEMENT, SO AS NOT TO REDUCE THE OUTSIDE CHANCE
OF A MODERN FESTIVAL STILL WITHIN THIS YEAR. AS FOR THE
PROTOCOL PROBLEM OF INVITATIONS TO REGULAR EMBASSY
SHOWINGS, THIS TOO HAS YET TO BE FULLY WORKED OUT AND
WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF A LATER MESSAGE, AS WEILL ALSO
THE REACTION OF RESPONSIBLE GDR FILM OFFICIALS TO THE
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IMMINENCE OF A WEEK OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN FILMS.POLANSKY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BERLIN05671
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770117-0231
Format: TEL
From: BERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770492/aaaadcqk.tel
Line Count: 140
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0a4601ab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 71323
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2912517
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US FILM RETROSPECTIVE
TAGS: OGEN
To: STATE USIA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0a4601ab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009